

Minutes of the Sound View Beach Commission Formation Committee APPROVED

Meeting held: November 23, 2009 at Shoreline Community Center, 7.30pm

Present: Regular Members: Gail Fuller, Frank Pappalardo (Chairman), Michaelle Pearson (Secretary), Harry Plaut, David Griswold (late arrival).

Absent: Russell Carlo (alternate), Joann Lishing (alternate)

Also present: David Kelsey

Call to Order: 7.45pm

Minutes from October meeting.

Harry Plaut made a motion to table approval of the October minutes until our next meeting. Frank Pappalardo seconded. Motion passed. Minutes tabled.

7.50 SSD review: Frank Pappalardo reported on the meeting he and Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder had with Mark Pellegrini, Manchester's Town Planner. Manchester's SSD was formed in 1992 in response to the malls going up in town. The object of that SSD was to preserve downtown. Frank outlined the process by which an SSD may be formed: Town passes an ordinance establishing an SSD. This ordinance describes the geographical boundaries of the proposed SSD and also the powers the SSD will have. Once the ordinance is passed at Town Meeting, it must then be voted on by the residents of the SSD. A double majority is required for passage. Mr. Pappalardo said that one of the benefits of an SSD is that it can directly apply for funding and grants, rather than having to apply through the BOS.

Michaelle Pearson stated that she felt the SSD concept was too broad and far-reaching, and would impose another layer of government and taxation on our residents. While she agreed that a committee wouldn't have enough power, Sound View is a very small area, and its problems could be solved through other means, such as a blight ordinance, enforcing existing ordinances and giving tax incentives to encourage the kind of development we'd like to see happen in the area.

Harry Plaut asked if a Commission would have a better chance of approval because residents would likely have issues with adding an extra layer of taxation and government bureaucracy. He thought it would be difficult to persuade residents to vote on anything that had the potential to raise their taxes.

Frank Pappalardo asked the Committee to forget the tax issues for the moment, and to focus on what their vision for Sound View in the next 5-10 years might be.

Harry Plaut said we should get rid of the bars and replace them with residential properties, condos, etc. There followed some discussion about the difficulties presented by zoning, septic restrictions, etc.

Gail Fuller stated that the Haverland Report suggested a restaurant at the end of the street as a centerpiece of the area, with a pedestrian mall or broad sidewalk.

David Griswold joined the meeting at 8.25pm

David Kelsey (who serves on the Old Lyme Finance Committee) suggested that the reason the bars are still there is because that's currently the highest and best use of those properties. If owners were allowed to put in a proper septic for a restaurant or condos, they might convert those properties to another use. To impose a significant vision on a community you have to have significant "buy-in". Parking is also an issue for a lot of the better uses.

Gail: There currently is a special zoning here on these two blocks, the Sound View Village District (SVVD).

Harry Plaut said he'd like to see art galleries, boutiques and a theatre or performing arts center.

Michaëlle Pearson said that Sound View should be tied into the arts district in the center of town. There could be tax abatements for live/ work artists and artisans, with attached stipulations for community-oriented shows and events. She stated that the best way to get things done is to offer people incentives, so they will want to improve and develop their properties in an appropriate way.

Gail suggested using part of the parking lot as parkland. She would like to see the commercial part of Hartford Avenue become more pedestrian-friendly. Harry Plaut said that he recalled that when this was last proposed, business owners complained because the on-street parking is important for all businesses, but he agreed that if there was more of a pedestrian experience, that would be a draw as well.

David Griswold said he'd like to see small restaurants and shops, something attractive, so the perceptions about the area would change. If it's set up so investors can come in, almost like a bid, rather than having one developer impose their vision, the area could be developed in a way that would serve the interests of the town.

Frank Pappalardo agreed that Sound View should be an asset to the town, that would create tax revenue for the town, through viable businesses, nice properties and minimal services.

David Kelsey raised the issue of how best to facilitate the goal without incurring big costs. He stated that a significant shift in approach to zoning has been harkening back to mixed use, so there can be a shop on the ground floor with an apartment above.

Frank Pappalardo summarized, stating that we need to solidify pieces of our vision: take key ideas from our research, from Haverland, etc., then decide whether we are leaning toward establishing an SSD or a Commission. Ultimately, we'd like this area to be a centerpiece within the town such as in Westerly. We need to arrange our selling points and vision of where we'd like this area to be in the next five or 10 years.

David Kelsey suggested that we keep our goals broad: we'd like to encourage restaurants, galleries and boutiques. Goal is to have a three-season business community.

There will be no meeting in December. The January meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 11<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall.\* Subsequent meetings are February 22, March 22, April 26.  
\*NOTE: January meeting has been moved to Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 9.35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. Pearson, Secretary